

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Annals of Iowa

Volume 3 | Number 4 (1898)

pps. 302-305

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Horace M. Rebok

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

Rebok, Horace M. "The Burial of a War Chief." *The Annals of Iowa* 3 (1898), 302-305.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.2298>

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THE BURIAL OF A WAR CHIEF.

BY HORACE M. REBOK, U. S. INDIAN AGENT, TOLEDO, IOWA.

Ma-tau-e-quā, the last war chief of the Sac and Fox Indians, of Iowa, who knew what it meant to meet the enemy in open battle or to take him from ambush in the pioneer days of the State, died in camp along the Iowa river about four miles west of Tama at sunrise on the morning of October 4th, at the advanced age of eighty-seven years. The old chief had been in failing health for several years, but the serious illness which led to his death was two months in duration, and in the end he was the victim of consumption, one of the diseases that is responsible for a very high death rate among these Indians.

Ma-tau-e-quā was born at Dubuque, Iowa, in 1810, and had the place and date tattooed on his right arm. In physique, habits, customs and mental endowments, he was a typical Indian of the warrior days. While he was always reticent in speaking of his personal activities in the early events which filled the pioneer days with stories of war, adventure and romance, the men of his tribe hold as sacred legacies the traditions of the part Ma-tau-e-quā played in some of the early struggles along the Mississippi river and in Iowa. He was not of royal blood. He never laid hereditary claims to leadership, yet even in his young manhood he was recognized as one of the strongest characters of his tribe and was the last one of the five sent out on the tribe's return from Kansas to find a suitable abiding place in Iowa, and on July 13, 1857, he, in company with his four associates, purchased eighty acres of land from one of the early settlers in Tama county for \$1,000. When these scouts were sent out by the tribe the Indians were residing temporarily at various points between Iowa City and Ottumwa, but soon after the selection of a location in Tama county the members of the tribe came to this place, and to their original tract of



MA-TAU-E-QUA.

The last War Chief of the Sac and Fox Indians of Iowa.

eighty acres there has been added from time to time adjoining farms of white settlers until today they are in possession of nearly three thousand acres. During most of the period of their residence in Tama county, Ma-tau-e-quā was the strong man of the tribe, especially in more recent years. He was no king, but he was a king-maker. He was the Warwick of the Musquakies. When the old chief who brought the Indians back into Iowa died, and his son was young and timid, it was Ma-tau-e-quā who called about him the head men of the tribe and had Push-e-to-neke-quā, the present ruling chief, proclaimed the chief of the tribe, and through all these years Ma-tau-e-quā has been the mainstay of the ruling chief. Within the knowledge of the writer, these two men never failed to stand together on any important matter, and while the king is more progressive in his methods than the king-maker, he never advanced beyond where his Warwick would acquiesce, and it must be said to the credit of this barbarian warrior that he had a happy faculty of cheerfully acquiescing in the inevitable. He was a strong opponent of education and the last time the agent discussed the question with him he ended his reply by saying, "May be, after I am dead."

Ma-tau-e-quā's burial on Tuesday afternoon, October 5th, at one o'clock, was attended with considerable interest and many of the business men from Montour, Tama and Toledo paid their respects to his memory by calling at his late wigwam, and quite a number attended his burial. Judge Burnham adjourned the district court at Toledo to accompany the agent to the funeral, in company with Inspector A. J. Duncan, of Washington, D. C., and Hon. S. M. Endicott, of Traer. The burying ground where Ma-tau-e-quā's body rests is situated on the south slope of a high bluff along the north bank of the Iowa river about an eighth of a mile east of the "Narrows" where the Chicago & Northwestern Railway passes between the bluff and the dam. The body had been carefully prepared and preserved according to Indian methods and customs, and was dressed in the regalia of a war chief. It was wrapped in a blanket and laid on a

frame-work of poles over which was spread a new piece of matting woven by Indian women from rushes in beautiful designs of various colors. Before his death the old chief had selected Pa-to-ka to have charge of his burial and had given minute directions as to all the appointments, and all his directions were closely followed. He was buried in a rough coffin, in a sitting posture, the painted feather in his hair coming just to the edge of the ground, his face to the west, and his face and breast laid bare. Otherwise he was clad in moccasins, leggins and blanket, and adorned with beads and paint much as he had appeared on many important occasions. In the coffin were placed a bottle of water, a small vessel containing food, an Indian hand-bag containing many little articles that would be useful on the journey to the happy hunting ground, and his two walking sticks. Then a lid was placed over the lower part of the coffin, covering the limbs of the body, leaving the chest exposed, and over the lid of the coffin were spread several blankets. All the blankets and clothing used by the deceased during his sickness were placed in the grave. After the body had been arranged in the coffin, Wa-pellu-ka, an old man who had fought in more than one historic battle side by side with Ma-tau-e-quā, delivered an address in the Indian language at the grave, and, according to the Indian custom, was the first to sprinkle tobacco into the grave. In this ceremony he was followed by all the other Indians present who passed around the grave as they sprinkled holy tobacco into the coffin, and one of their number sat by the open grave for several minutes and in a low monotone performed the last rites. The tobacco used in their burial exercises is raised by a few of the priests of the tribe on a small patch of ground set apart for that purpose, and is used only in connection with their religious ceremonies.

No ground was permitted to touch the body, and after the body had been properly arranged in the coffin a gable roof constructed of boards was placed over the open grave; over the boards a canvas was spread and the grave was in-

closed with a crib-work of oak poles and the angular space between the roof and the poles was filled with earth.

After the grave had been finished Wa-pellu-ka closed the ceremonies with brief remarks in the Indian language. A heavy pole was then erected at the west end of the grave about four feet out of the ground and on it was painted by George Morgan, the secretary of the tribe, a few emblems to characterize events in the life of Ma-tau-e-quā. At the left was painted the picture of a bear, representing the band of the Bear to which Ma-tau-e-quā belonged, and opposite was painted the picture of an eagle. Under the eagle was the bust of a man and under this the name of Wa-pellu-ka written in Indian, and a gun. Wa-pellu-ka belongs to the band of the Eagle. Lower down are five horizontal marks which are used to represent an event in the life of Ma-tau-e-quā and Wa-pellu-ka, wherein they had an encounter with four Pawnee Indians in Kansas and fought side by side for several hours leaving the field with the scalps of their four enemies dangling at their belts. The stake contained beside these characters, the picture of a Sioux buck and a Sioux squaw, and one mark under each, indicating that Ma-tau-e-quā had killed one of each.

At this point, Pa-to-ka, who was in charge of the burial, took all the effects left by the old warrior and divided them among the six other men who had assisted him in the burial. Before the exercises were finished all the white visitors left the grounds except Mr. O. B. Chitty, and in the distribution of gifts he was kindly remembered as the only representative of the white race. The exercises at the grave lasted about two hours.

In conclusion, it may be added that stoicism has reached its highest point among these people and that their funerals are conducted with no sign of emotion.

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